

NUÑEZ ASSUMES ASSEMBLY SPEAKERSHIP

As scheduled, [Fabien Nuñez](#) (D-Los Angeles) became the Assembly's youngest Speaker on Monday, February 9. And, as has been the case in recent years, the new Speaker began his term by making several changes in the chairs and membership of various Assembly committees.



Especially notable changes include the removal of Nuñez's three rivals for the speakership from key committee posts. Former Assembly Budget Committee Chair [Jenny Oropeza](#) (D-Long Beach) has been replaced in that post (and as the Assembly's top budget negotiator) by [Darrell Steinberg](#) (D-Sacramento), but was made chair of the Transportation Committee.

Assm. [Joe Nation](#) (D-San Rafael) has been replaced as chair of the Rules Committee by [Cindy Montanez](#) (D-San Fernando), and Assm. [Dario Frommer](#) (D-Los Feliz) has been replaced as Chair of the Assembly Health Committee by [Rebecca Cohn](#) (D-Saratoga).

In another change of note, Assm. [John Dutra](#) (D-Fremont) was made Chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee #4, which has oversight over judiciary budget issues. He replaces [Rudy Bermudez](#) (D - Norwalk), who assumes the chairmanship of the Revenue & Taxation Committee.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION REFORM

Propelling themselves into the center of what may become the key policy issue of the year, Senate and Assembly committees on Wednesday held informational hearings on the state's workers' compensation system. The Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee and the Assembly Insurance Committee plan to hold additional hearings in the coming weeks on various aspects of workers' compensation law.

The Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee took testimony from a variety of stakeholders who presented their perspectives on the permanent disability provisions. Reform of the permanent disability provisions in current law is deemed key to any sort of comprehensive reform that will produce the kind of savings to the \$29

billion system sought by both private and public employers.

The committee has scheduled five additional hearings through February 26. Two of those hearings will focus on specific legislative proposals for workers' compensation reform. The committee next week will hear the nine Senate bills introduced into the Special Session on Workers' Compensation Reform called by Governor Schwarzenegger. One of the bills, SB 3 of the 4th Extraordinary Session ([SB4X 3](#)) by Senator [Charles Poochigian](#) (R-Fresno), is the Senate vehicle for carrying the governor's comprehensive workers' compensation reform plan.

The Assembly Insurance Committee held a bifurcated hearing because special session legislation was on its agenda. Thus a portion of the hearing was dedicated to [AB4X 1 \(Maldonado\)](#), the measure that reflects Governor Schwarzenegger's workers' compensation reform package. Another portion of the hearing focused on State Insurance Commissioner [John Garamendi's](#) workers' compensation proposal, a plan that has been dubbed as a compromise between the governor's proposal and the Legislature's Democratic majority. The committee has not yet scheduled additional hearings for February.

Governor Schwarzenegger has imposed a March 1 deadline for the Legislature to deliver a comprehensive workers' compensation reform bill or package of bills to his desk.

SAN DIEGO BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING TIME/PLACE SET

The Wednesday, February 18, hearing of Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Subcommittee #4 on judicial branch funding issues scheduled by subcommittee chair Senator [Joseph Dunn](#) (D-Santa Ana), has been set from noon to 2:30 p.m. at the San Diego Association of Governments, 401 B Street, Suite 800.

The hearing will be broadcast via the internet, and can be followed by connecting to the SANDAG website at www.sandag.org and clicking on the "Listen to Live Broadcast" icon.

The committee encourages the submission of written comments and testimony, which should be forwarded to Senator Dunn, State Capitol, Room 2080, Sacramento, CA 95814 or e-mail to ronda.paschal@sen.ca.gov